Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

 1. (canceled)

 2. (currently amended) A method for removing channels from a data transmission, comprising:

 receiving a plurality of bytes of data associated with a plurality of channels;

 identifying at least one unused byte in the plurality of bytes; and

 generating a data packet comprising at least a portion of the plurality of bytes, the data packet including a flag indicating that the at least one unused byte has been suppressed, wherein the flag comprises one bit for each identified unused byte.

 3. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

 transmitting the data packet to a destination node over a communications network, wherein the destination node identifies the at least one unused byte based on the flag.

 4. (previously presented) The method of claim 3, further comprising:

 forwarding the data packet to a plurality of intermediate nodes prior to the destination node, wherein the flag is included in the data packet forwarded to each of the plurality of intermediate nodes.

5. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the generating a data packet comprises:

omitting the at least one unused byte from the data packet.

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the data packet comprises an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the data packet comprises a frame relay packet.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the data packet comprises an Internet Protocol packet.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the plurality of channels represent Ds0 channels and the flag includes one bit for each unused Ds0 channel.

11. (currently amended) A system for removing channels from a data transmission, comprising:

a first node configured to:

receive a plurality of bytes of data,

identify at least one unused byte in the plurality of bytes,

generate a data packet comprising at least a portion of the plurality of bytes of data, <u>the portion of the plurality of bytes of data comprising data associated with a plurality of channels,</u> and

attach a flag to the data packet, the flag indicating that the at least one unused byte has been omitted from the data packet <u>and the flag identifying each unused channel in the data packet</u>.

12. (currently amended) The system of claim 11, wherein the plurality of ~~bytes represents a~~ <u>channels comprise a</u> plurality of Ds0 channels and the flag identifies each unused Ds0 channel.

13. (previously presented) The system of claim 11, further comprising:

a destination node, and

wherein the first node is further configured to:

transmit the data packet to the destination node over a communications network, and

wherein the destination node is configured to:

identify the at least one unused byte based on the flag.

14. (previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the data packet comprises an asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) cell.

15. (previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the data packet comprises a frame relay packet.

16. (previously presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the data packet comprises an Internet Protocol packet.

17. (currently amended) A method for removing channels when transmitting information over a communications network including a plurality of nodes, comprising:

determining, by a first node, if at least one byte in a plurality of bytes to be transmitted is unused;

generating a packet comprising at least a portion of the plurality of bytes;

attaching a flag to the packet when the determining indicates that at least one byte is unused, wherein the plurality of bytes represents a plurality of channels and the flag identifies each unused channel; and

transmitting, by the first node, the packet.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the generating a packet comprises:

suppressing or omitting each unused byte in the packet.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising:

receiving, by a destination node, the packet;

unsuppressing each suppressed or omitted byte based on the flag.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the communications network includes a destination node, the method further comprising:

agreeing to a unique identification for the flag during initiation of a communication channel between the first node and the destination node.

21. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, wherein the communications network includes a plurality of intermediate nodes and a destination node, the method further comprising:

receiving, by at least one of the intermediate nodes, the packet; and

forwarding, by the at least one intermediate node, the packet to the destination node, the forwarded packet including the flag.

22. (previously presented) The method of claim 17, further comprising:

separating the plurality of bytes into channels, wherein the flag identifies unused channels.

23. (currently amended) A system for removing data channels from a data transmission, comprising:

means for determining if at least one byte in a plurality of bytes is at least one of silent or unused;

means for generating a data packet comprising at least a portion of the plurality of bytes, the means for generating omitting each byte determined to be at least one of silent or unused; and

means for attaching a flag to the data packet when at least one byte is omitted, wherein the plurality of bytes represent a plurality of channels and the flag identifies each omitted channel.

24. (currently amended) The system of claim 23, wherein the plurality of ~~bytes represent a~~ channels comprise a plurality of Ds0 channels and the flag identifies each omitted Ds0 channel.